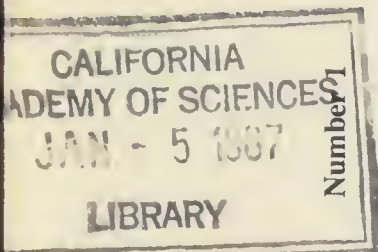


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THE GULL



NORTH AMERICAN OWLS Some Success Stories

Encouraging news about owls: a nest box program in the Davis area has doubled the nesting population of Barn Owls there. This is one of the ways the UC Davis Raptor Center has helped these birds in their conflicts with man's encroachment upon their habitat. In addition, on the UCD campus, the administration, at the urging of the Raptor Center, has erected signs around Burrowing Owl's nests to alert students, helping this declining species to survive. Finally, a study of Short-eared Owls is helping to insure their chances of surviving in our over-developed and ever-developing world.

Terry Schultz, a research associated in zoo medicine at the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine, will explain how these programs have helped rehabilitate various owl species. Terry, who works with Murray Fowler, supervises and trains veterinary students in husbandry techniques and in recognition and treatment of avian diseases. He is, therefore, just the qualified authority to inform us, through his slide presentation, all about North American owls.

Give a hoot and come to our meeting on January 8, 1987, at 7:30, held at the Josephine Randall Junior Museum in San Francisco.

The February meeting, on the 12th in Berkeley will feature Steve Granholm speaking on "Western Slope Sierra Birds: An Ecological Transect".

—TOM WHITE
Program Committee

A Bird in the Hand

The announcement of a meeting devoted to hawking turned out to be premature. Several potential speakers who were asked to appear with the falconer and express the view of those opposed to the sport were unavailable at this time. Tom White will continue to work for the scheduling of this interesting program.

FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

Saturday, January 3—Palo Alto Baylands. See December *Gull* for details.

Saturday, January 10—Stockton, Lodi and Thornton. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Stockton sewage ponds at the main gate. From the Bay Area take Hwy. 580 to Hwy. 4 (Charter Way) in Stockton. Go west on Hwy. 4 about 1.5 miles to the entrance to the sewage ponds. We will bird at the Stockton sewage ponds, then caravan to the Lodi sewage ponds and to Thornton to look for cranes. Dress warmly and be prepared for rain. Bring lunch. Leader: David Yee (209-951-1526). (✓)

Sunday, January 11—Dillon Beach. Meet at 7:45 a.m. at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, section H (just east of the Sir Francis Drake off-ramp from Hwy. 101). We will leave there promptly at 8 a.m. for the town of Tomales where we will stop by the old Bank of America building on Hwy. 1 at 9 a.m. to meet the people from west Marin. From there we will continue to caravan to Lawson's Landing (entrance fee). Bring lunch, warm clothes, rain gear and a scope if you have one. We may see three species of Loons, Red-necked Grebes, White Pelicans, Brants and Snowy Plovers. Golden Plovers are regular on this trip. Leader: Mary Louise Rosegay (386-1640). (✓)

Wednesday, January 14—Mini-trip to Arrowhead Marsh, Oakland. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the marsh. Take Hwy. 17 to the Hegenberger Rd. exit, proceed to Doolittle, turn right onto Doolittle and go a short distance and turn right

onto Swan. Turn left after about a block and follow the signs to the marsh. Park in the second parking lot on the left. We will look for Burrowing Owls and ducks. There will be a 7.3 ft. tide which should flush out rails. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Delpha de Timofeev and Ruth Voss (525-8032). (✓)

Saturday, January 17—Carrizo Plain. From the Bay Area drive south on Hwy. 101 to Paso Robles or south on I-5 to Kettleman City. Lodging is available in both places. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Cholame on Hwy. 46, about 24 miles east of Paso Robles. Driving time is four and one-half to five hours so we suggest that you plan to arrive Friday evening. We will bird all day so you may wish to stay in the area Saturday night. There is a new motel (California Valley Motel) in California Valley (no food or gas). Bring lunch, liquids, warm clothes and perhaps a spotting scope. This area is excellent for Sandhill Cranes, a wide variety of Raptors, Mountain Plover and Longspurs. Not only will we see birds but we will also discuss the geology of the area. The San Andreas Fault is an outstanding feature here. The Nature Conservancy is studying this area for a possible refuge.

Considering the length of the drive and the possibility of poor weather (high winds or snow), it is possible that this trip will be cancelled at the last minute. It will also be called off if there is an insufficient number of participants. It is therefore important that you notify Shirley Kelly (387-8290) if you plan to attend. Leave your name, number in your party and a phone number where you can be reached if the

trip is cancelled. Leader: Eben McMillan. (✓)

Sunday, January 18—Grizzley and Joice Islands Wildlife Area. Take I-80 north to Fairfield. Take the Fairfield/Rio Vista (Hwy. 12 east) exit and go east (right) on West Texas St. for about one-half mile to the City Park. Meet at the parking lot near the entrance at **8:30 a.m.** We will caravan from there to the refuge. We should see a variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and marshbirds. Bring lunch and scopes. Leader: Peter Allen (892-8063). (✓)

Saturday, January 24—Panoche Valley. Meet at **8 a.m.** at the reservoir on Hwy. 25, ¼ mile south of the intersection of Hwy. 25 and J-1 Paicines, 12.5 miles south of Hollister. From there we will drive east to I-5 south of Los Banos. Bring lunch and warm clothes. Considering the distance involved in this trip be sure to fill your gas tank before the trip and carpool from the Bay Area if at all possible. In the past we have seen Mountain Plover, Mountain Bluebird, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Vesper Sparrow and Lewis' Woodpecker.

Call Shirley Kelly for reservations if you plan to attend this trip (387-8290). Leave your name, phone number and number in party. Assume your reservation is accepted unless you hear otherwise. Leader: Chris Carpenter (874-6097). (✓)

Sunday, January 25—Los Banos State Refuge. Meet at **8 a.m.** at the refuge headquarters located 3 miles north of Los Banos on Henry Miller Rd. Allow 2½ to 3 hours driving time from the Bay Area. Considering the distance involved in this trip, be sure to fill your gas tank before the trip and carpool from the Bay Area if at all possible. Bring lunch and warm clothes. We will look for White-faced Ibis, Sandhill Cranes, Bald Eagles and assorted waterfowl.

Call Shirley Kelly for reservations if you plan to attend this trip (387-8290). Leave your name, phone number and number in party. Assume your reservation is accepted unless you hear otherwise. Since we have been informed that the refuge may be closed due to road repairs it is important that we have a number at which you could be reached immediately before the trip. Leaders: Peter and Dolores White (229-1714). (✓)

Sunday, February 1—Bay Park Refuge, Oakland. Meet at **8:30 a.m.** in the parking lot at the north end of Bay Park Refuge for a morning of leisurely birding. This trip is good for beginners. From Hwy. 17 take the Hegenberger Rd. exit, go right (north) on Edgewater Dr. for about one mile to the park. Bring a scope if you have one. Lunch is optional. We should see a variety of ducks, gulls and shorebirds. This trip is wheelchair accessible. Leader: Dave Cornman (825-2106).

Carpooling arrangements can be made for trips marked (✓). Call Kate Partridge at 236-7022 and leave a message. She will contact you.

Problems: If for any reason you have difficulty getting in touch with a field trip leader or need information regarding a trip, call Shirley Kelly (387-8290) or the GGAS office (843-2222).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

CORRECTION

The GULL for December erred in reporting that John Nutt was chairman of the nominating committee. John had volunteered to *find* a committee for this purpose, and his recommendation was approved at the November meeting of the board of directors. The members include Helen Green, Shirley Kelly and Don Sanford. Their phone numbers may be found on the back cover. Please call any of them with your suggestions (including your own willingness to serve).

NOVEMBER OBSERVATIONS October 29 through November 25

Mild weather interspersed with weak cold fronts and a smattering of rain accompanied the return of wintering ducks and some lowland invaders. South East Farallon Island's fall season was characterized as a "banner migration with high species diversity and moderate numbers" (all SE Farallon Island information thanks to Point Reyes Bird Observatory).

Tubenoses

Pelagic birders going for the rare ones off Cordell Banks in early November found surprisingly large numbers of Black-footed Albatrosses. Two boats on Nov. 1 reported 20 and 35 respectively (SJ, PA, *fide* SFB), and 12 to 20 were spotted from a single boat out of Bodega Bay Nov. 2 (JML, SJ). Another Black-footed Albatross was seen Nov. 6 on a Monterey pelagic trip (SJ).

Northern Fulmars were found in both local pelagic birding areas: 100 at the Cordell Banks Nov. 1 (PS, *fide* SFB), and 130 out of Monterey Nov. 6 (SJ). Four Flesh-footed Shearwaters were near Cordell Banks Nov. 1 (PA, *fide* SFB), and one was found on a Monterey pelagic trip Nov. 6 (SJ). Buller's Shearwaters decreased from last month, but were still being found in good numbers in early November with a high count of 670 near Cordell Banks Nov. 2 (SJ). Short-tailed Shearwater numbers increased from one at the Cordell Banks Nov. 1 (PS, *fide* SFB), and one in the Gulf of Farallones Nov. 2 (TJ), to 44 on a Monterey trip Nov. 6 (SJ). One Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel was found on a Gulf of Farallones trip Nov. 2 (TJ). A Leach's Storm-Petrel appeared on a Cordell

Banks trip Nov. 1 (PS, *fide* SFB).

Hérons through Waterfowl

Two apparent Little Blue Heron/Snowy Egret hybrids were seen loitering about Corte Madera Creek Nov. 8-21 (HP, PW, DWO). Reports of single Cattle Egrets came from such diverse locations as 5th & Harrison in downtown San Francisco Oct. 30-31 (BSm), Moonglow Dairy Nov. 15 (DLSu), Rodeo Lagoon Nov. 16-17 (JCo), and south of Butano State Park, San Mateo Co. Nov. 23 (PJM). Four were at Lawson's Landing Nov. 21 (RHa). Fifty White-faced Ibis were off Sandy Mush Road in Merced Co. Nov. 19 (JMS); another fifty at Sacramento Wildlife Refuge Nov. 22 (CSw) were more unexpected.

A Tundra Swan at Pescadero Marsh Nov. 16 (PJM) remained at least to Nov. 25 (JMS). Two Snow Geese and two Ross' Geese surprised pelagic birders off Cordell Banks Nov. 1 (SFB). A blue phase Snow Goose (JTr, CSw) and a blue phase Ross's Goose (JTr) were seen at Gray Lodge Nov. 23. Eurasian Wigeons have returned in good numbers throughout the area with twelve individuals sighted to the end of the report period. Single male Harlequin Ducks have again made their appearances at Rodeo (GH) and Bolinas Lagoons, the Bolinas Harlequin last being noted Nov. 22 (DW, SFi, RMS, EG). A female Harlequin Duck found Hayward Landing Nov. 21 (BR), and a male was seen in Santa Cruz off the coast Nov. 23 (DLSu). An Oldsquaw was spotted on a boat trip to the Cordell Banks Nov. 1 (RV, LJ, *fide* SFB); another was in Tomales Bay Nov. 8 (DAH, JCo). Barrow's Goldeneyes returned to local ponds and lagoons—the largest congregation of 18 was at Lake Merritt Nov. 21-22 (JaH, TC). Many Hooded Mergansers have re-

turned to the area this month: 3 males and 6 females at Sky Londa Pond in San Mateo Co. Nov. 18 was the largest gathering (JMS).

Raptors through Alcids

An adult Bald Eagle was in eastern Alameda Co. near Patterson Pass and Midway Roads Nov. 9-22 (DC, JR, et al.), and an immature Bald Eagle appeared at Pilarcitos Creek near Half Moon Bay Nov. 16 (PJM). An immature Broad-winged Hawk in southern Palo Alto Oct. 31 represents a first Santa Clara Co. record (DLSu). An adult Golden Eagle at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Nov. 22 (CSw) is rare for the Central Valley. A Black Rail was found at Pine Gulch Creek Nov. 3 (SNGH), and two were seen there Nov. 5 (DW); another was observed during the high tide at Palo Alto Baylands Nov. 4 (JMD). A Mountain Plover near the Drake's Beach intersection at Pt. Reyes surprised observers (WG, AG). A Rock Sandpiper at SE Farallon Nov. 11 can be expected to winter there. Another was at Princeton Harbor in its usual wintering location Nov. 15-16 (HG, LJP, JAW, PJM). Two South Polar Skuas were observed near the Cordell Banks Nov. 1 (PA, *fide* SFB). Two adult Little Gulls enjoyed the Stockton Sewage Ponds Nov. 5 (KGH), and one was seen there Nov. 16 (SS). Late Sabine's Gulls numbered five Nov. 1 (SFB), and one Nov. 2 (JML) all at the Cordell Banks. Unusual was a Black Tern at Scott Creek in Santa Cruz Co. Oct. 30 (RAE). Common Murres returned to SE Farallon in the thousands in early November to prepare for the next breeding season. A Tufted Puffin was seen Nov. 1 (PA, *fide* SFB), and four were found the next day (SJ), on boat trips to Cordell Banks.

Landbirds

A Common Poorwill flew about Albany Landfill Nov. 10 (DDK);

another was found on the fire trail near the Space Science building in Berkeley Nov. 11 (CSw, SLG); and one was at Aptos Creek Road in Santa Cruz Co. Nov. 13 (DLSu). A male Black-chinned Hummingbird visited a San Francisco residence Nov. 3-4 (EB). A Costa's Hummingbird enjoyed mild weather in a Berkeley yard Oct. 28 to mid-November (JoS). An Acorn Woodpecker at SE Farallon Nov. 11 was the sixth record for the Island. A Red-naped Sapsucker was seen along Livermore Mines Road Nov. 2-22 (JMD, KGH, ALE). An Eastern Phoebe graced SE Farallon Nov. 20 for a seventh Island record. Three Tropical Kingbirds made appearances: SE Farallon Oct. 28 (a seventh Island record), New Willows at Pt. Reyes Nov. 1 (JML), and the Ortho Research Center near Hilltop Plaza, Contra Costa Co. Nov. 14-20 (TK, *fide* RB). A Cassin's Kingbird, found near Butano State Park Nov. 18 (JMS), was still there Nov. 21 (MLR). The American Dipper at Lake Temescal was last reported Oct. 30 (DSi). Mountain Bluebirds returned to their usual wintering locations, 100 being seen off Del Puerto Canyon Road Nov. 9 (PGO).

A Solitary Vireo of the plumbeous form was at the Cheese Factory, Marin Co. Nov. 13 (JSL). A Nashville Warbler was found at Pilarcitos Creek Nov. 16 (PJM), and a Virginia's Warbler visited SE Farallon Nov. 2. A male Black-throated Blue Warbler, at SE Farallon Oct. 29, brings this fall's total to 6. Over eight additional Palm Warbler records, from Sonoma to Monterey Cos. and at SE Farallon, Nov. 1-23 bring our fall total to 50+. One female Black-and-white Warbler remained at Stinson Beach through Nov. 10 (DW). A **Mourning Warbler**, at the Carmel River Mouth Nov. 4 (DR), was a second mainland and seventh record for this fall.

A female Indigo Bunting was at the

Carmel River Mouth Nov. 4 (DR). An American Tree Sparrow was briefly seen at the Albany Landfill Nov. 9 (DDK). A Black-throated Sparrow, discovered at the Stockton Sewage Ponds Nov. 16 (SS), was still there Nov. 19 (DGY, *fide* RAE). At least two Sharp-tailed Sparrows and two Swamp Sparrows returned to Pine Gulch Creek and were seen by many observers Nov. 2-14. Two Palo Alto Baylands Sharp-tailed Sparrows also received lots of attention Nov. 3-16 (mob). Other Swamp Sparrows were found as follows: one at Coyote Hills Nov. 11 (RAE), one at Pilarcitos Creek Nov. 16 (PJM), and one at White House Pool near Inverness Nov. 23 (BDP). Over 33 White-throated Sparrows have been reported this fall in our area, one backyard containing five at one time (KSW)—and think of all the unreported ones! A Harris's Sparrow arrived at SE Farallon Nov. 11. Another visited a residence in Hayward Nov. 19-24 (MMo, *fide* Phil Gordon). Three Lapland Longspurs remained at Hayward Shoreline Park throughout the period (BR). One Chestnut-collared Longspur reached SE Farallon Oct. 28, and a Snow Bunting was there Nov. 10. A Bobolink found at Las Gallinas Sewage Ponds Nov. 11 (WG, AG) represents a late record for this area and brings this fall's total to 25. A Rusty Blackbird at SE Farallon Oct. 28 provided the Island with its seventh record. An Orchard Oriole touched down at Giacomini Ravine, Pt. Reyes Nov. 1 (JML). Evening Grosbeaks have been sighted in Santa Cruz and San Mateo Cos. throughout the period (DLSu, PJM, RTh, et al.), with a large concentration of 70 off Graham Hill Road, Santa Cruz Nov. 9 (DLSu).

Erratum: In the November *Gull*, on p. 128, the Solitary Sandpiper at Bolinas Lagoon on Aug. 21 was a figment of

my imagination. Luckily, my computer has almost no imagination.

Observers: Stephen F. Bailey, Robert Ball, Erica Buhrmann, Kurt F. Campbell, Tom Condit, John Comstock (JCo), Debbie Cotter, J. Mike Danzenbaker, Art L. Edwards, Jim Elder, Richard A. Erickson, Shawneen Finnegan (SFi), Al Ghiorso, Wilma Ghiorso, Philip E. Gordon, Peter Gottschling (PGo), Stephen L. Granholm, Edward Greaves, Helen Green, Marguerite B. Gross, Jay Harlow (JaH), Ed Hase III, Rob Hayden (RHa), Kevin G. Hints, Bob Hirt, David A. Holway, Alan S. Hopkins, Steven N. G. Howell, George Hugenberg, Bob Johnsen, Tom Johnson, Lars Jonsson, Durrell D. Kapan, Ted Koundakjian, Jeri M. Langham, Donna Lion, John S. Luther, Peter J. Metropulos, Joseph Morlan, Mike Mortenson (MMo), Pacific Adventures, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Point Reyes Bird Observatory (Farallon Report thanks to Robert P. Henderson), Lina J. Prairie, Helen Pratt, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond, Don Roberson, Mary Louise Rosegay, Phil Rostron, Steve Schaeffer, Debra L. Shearwater, Shearwater Journeys, Dianne Sierra (DSi), Larry Silver (LSi), Bill Smith (BSm), Jean Marie Spoelman, Rich Stallcup, Robert M. Stewart, David L. Suddjian (DLSu), John Sutake (Jos), Chris Swarth (CSw), Ron Thorn (RTh), John Trochet (JTr), Richard Viet, Pat Welch, Janet A. Wessel, Katherine S. Wilson, David Wimpfheimer, Dennis Wolff, David G. Yee.

Please report observations to Northern California Rare Bird Alert: 528-0288.

—HELEN A. GREEN
Observations Editor
2001 Yolo Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94707

CONSERVATION NOTES CONCERN FOR TILDEN PARK

Tilden, our oldest regional park and without a master plan for 50 years, is finally getting one. A Land Use Development Plans (LUPD), under way in 1986, will be presented in a public hearing this spring. According to a tentative schedule it will be published the first of March, with a public hearing to be held at the end of that month. In mid-April the LUPD/EIR will be presented to the Park Advisory Committee. Finally in mid-May it will be given to the EBRPD Board for adoption.

The Conservation Committee feels strongly that before a Land Use and Development Plan can be developed there should be a new Resource Analysis. Important aspects that must be considered are feral cats, fuel-break management, and invasion of artichoke, thistle and broom. In addition, a resource survey must look at floral and habitat surveys, water quality of the Wild Cat Creek and an inventory of wildlife and vegetation.

Audubon members who use Tilden Park and are concerned about its future can call Marion Craig—845-5036—for updating on the progress of the LUPD.

CHECKLIST

- ☒ *News of environmental issues*
- ☒ *Background information*
- ☒ *Tips on how to become a more effective activist*
- ☒ *Insider's information*
- ☒ *Critical analyses and thoughtful essays*
- ☒ *Reviews and references*

You get all this and more with a subscription to **Audubon Activist**, the new, bimonthly newspaper for Audubon members who want to make a difference.

Subscribe today. Send your name, address, and zip code, along with six dollars (for one year), to: **Audubon Activist**, 950 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022. Make checks payable to National Audubon Society.

OAKLAND AIRPORT LETTERS

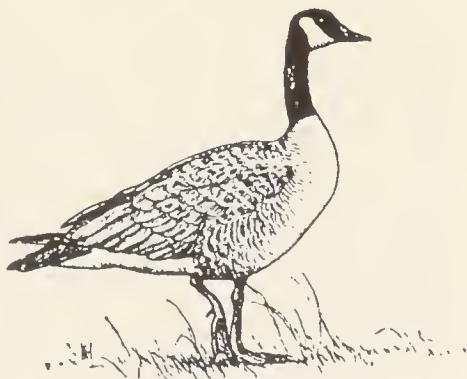
Assemblyman Elihu Harris and the Editor, Oakland Tribune are people who need to hear how we feel about the Oakland Airport wetlands issue. Recent issues of *The Gull* (pp. 117 and 132) will give you ideas for your letter. Here is something you can do with little cost and a little effort. And it's worth doing.

Assemblyman Elihu Harris
1111 Jackson Street, Room 5027
Oakland, CA 94607

Editor, Oakland Tribune
409 13th Street
Oakland, CA 94612

WE NEED YOU—AGAIN!

The Chronicle Great Outdoors Adventure Fair is coming to Brooks Hall in San Francisco on February 27, 28 and March 1 and we have been given a booth. It will be a great opportunity to acquaint the public with our activities and goals, but we need you folks to help staff the booth. As a participant, you will receive free admission to the Fair and our undying gratitude. Please save one time block during that week-end to help promote GGAS and explore a large display of outdoor sports, adventure and travel opportunities. Call the office to reserve a good time slot!



THE BACK YARD BIRDER

A biome is "one of the main types of a biological community characterized by soil conditions and climate which produce a distinctive form of vegetation which, in turn, is inhabited by characteristic animal forms."* In North America these biomes are: tundra, coniferous forest, deciduous forest, grassland, southwestern (U.S.) pine-oak woodland, pinyon-juniper woodland (plus the hills and slopes of western U.S.), chaparral and desert. Each of these biomes may be further subdivided on the basis of geography, e.g. arctic tundra vs. alpine tundra, or differences in plants, e.g. sagebrush desert vs. creosote scrub desert. Many species of birds are found in only one biome, such as our Wrentit (nearly always found in chaparral). Others, such as the American Crow, appear in most biomes.

We recently visited a wonderful desert area outside Phoenix, Arizona characterized by saguaro and other species of cacti, the landscape broken by rocky "islands" of boulders. A golf course with its water and grass attracted a variety of animals and birds. Having visited California's Palm Desert area, I was familiar with some of the bird life to be found in this particular biome. I, the supposed non-lister, greedily added 17 new birds to my list!

Scratching on the dusty ground among large numbers of White-crowned Sparrows was a handsome Black-throated Sparrow. Both the Blue-gray and the Black-tailed Gnatcatchers exhibited their fly-catching habits for my pleasure. Harris Hawks were a common sight as they cruised the area. They are described in my field guide as "gregarious." This was borne out as three young birds squeezed together on

the upturned arm of a saguaro cactus as the adults perched atop. They kept up a continuous conversation of screeches between them.

"Junk" birds, so-called because of their prevalence, were the Cactus Wren and the Phainopepla. The large wrens were quite tame and a delight to watch as they added bits of fluff from cactus blossoms gone to seed to their nests. These were well-protected nests built among the branches of cholla, a particularly sticky cactus. The Phainopeplas were in constant communication with soft, gurgling notes as they perched atop shrubs, ever-alert for passing insects.

Try as I might, I never spotted an Elf Owl peering out from one of the hundreds of holes that riddle the saguaro.

There was such a variety of habitat about the hotel that I got good looks at four species of thrasher: the Bendire's, Le Conte's, Curve-billed, and the Crissal.

The Gambel's Quail were everywhere early mornings and at dusk they competed with large numbers of cottontail rabbits for food on the tee areas. Although its call is similar to our California Quail, it had its own distinctive quality. It's a handsome bird.

Some old "friends" were evident, but of a different race. Upon finding the source of a familiar cry, I was thrilled to spot a Common Flicker of the Gilded race. The Brown Towhee behaved the same but had quite a different call and song, being of the Rocky Mountain race. Because I don't see them very often I enjoyed the Say's Phoebe, Verdin, Roadrunner, Northern Cardinal, Costa's Hummingbird and the Loggerhead Shrike.

A desert area can be a cruel and forbidding biome, even for those species adapted to the harsh condition of extreme temperatures and lack of rainfall.

*Leahy, Christopher, 1982. *A Birdwatcher's Companion*. New York.

For once, I felt that man had improved on Mother Nature, not upsetting the balance, but providing an oasis (albeit artificial) for the birds and animals of the desert. I'm sure that even the coyotes which serenaded us nightly were as well-fed as we.

—MEG PAULETICH

DISAPPEARANCE

During the summer of 1986, biologists from the Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) and the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) discovered that a breeding colony of Common Murres at Devil's Slide, San Mateo County, had ceased to exist. During an overflight on 5 June, when biologists were prepared to photograph the site for purposes of counting murre numbers, none were present although it should have been the peak of the nesting season. In 1980, when the last detailed count of birds was made, 2900 murres nested on the offshore rock, one of only five coastal sites where this species breeds in central California. During the 1970's and early 1980's, the numbers of murres at this site had been increasing. Common murres also nest offshore on the Farallon Islands, where their numbers have decreased dramatically since 1982. The recent history of the small colony at Devil's Slide thus reflects in an extreme fashion the declining trends in the region-wide murre population.

Among the possible causes of the disappearance, PRBO biologists suspect three major factors: gill netting, poor food availability in 1983 due to "El Nino", and two major oil pollution incidents (*Puerto Rican* tanker spill of November 1984 and *Apex Houston* [suspected] barge spill of February

1986). Gill netting is perhaps the major contributing factor, especially because the waters around Devil's Slide are favored netting areas for halibut and king fish. Murres tend to frequent the waters close to their nesting sites for much of the year. Regulations prohibiting gill nets during the nesting season in the vicinity of Devil's Slide went into effect in 1985 but may have been too late; allowing the setting of nets there during the non-nesting season was likely also a factor. In the case of "El Nino", that environmental phenomenon was known to have resulted in high murre mortality; however, in affected areas where gill netting is not allowed, populations have recovered significantly. The oil spill of February 1986, which killed thousands of murres in central California, affected seabirds especially in coastal waters, including those off San Francisco and San Mateo County shores; biologists from PRBO are currently attempting to better estimate the impact of these incidents on murre populations.

During two visits to the Devil's Slide site in late June and mid-July, biologists counted no more than 16 non-breeding murres. Consistent with their biology and behavior elsewhere, these would be young immature individuals which tend to visit their future breeding sites late in the murre nesting cycle. These youngsters could form the nucleus for future recovery of the Devil's Slide colony, unless they die prematurely. Under normal conditions, most would be expected to survive well into their breeding years.

Due to the disappearance of this seabird colony, as well as other factors, the Director of the California Department of Fish and Game used his emergency powers on October 1 to extend through December 31, 1986

several gill net fishing closures along the San Mateo, San Francisco and Marin coast. These closures would otherwise have expired on 30 September. The Department, along with federal and private agencies are currently working to find a longer term solution to the problem of gill netting impacts on seabird populations.

For more information telephone or write David Ainley or Harry Carter, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, (415) 868-1221; Don Schultze, California Department of Fish and Game., (916) 445-8386.

SPRING BIRDING CLASSES IN SAN FRANCISCO

Free evening bird classes will be offered through the San Francisco Community College District starting in January. Students may enroll at any time during the 18-week semester. Just go directly to the classroom indicated on the day and hour listed below. All classes will be at the City College of San Francisco near the intersection of Judson and Phelan Aves. These classes are not eligible for college credit. Parking is available in the North Reservoir off Phelan Ave. for a \$7.50 fee per semester. Obtain a student parking sticker by presenting your drivers license and registration at the registration office in Smith Hall. Explain that you are taking a no-fee Centers course and you will be provided with a student body card. The parking fee is waived for students 65 and over. The Balboa BART station is adjacent to the campus.

Each class stresses identification, status and habits of North American birds in a two-and-a-half hour weekly slide lecture. The text for all classes is *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* by the National Geographic Society, available from the GGAS of-

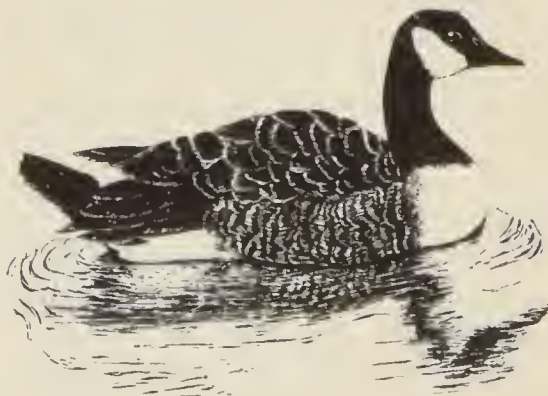
fice (832-2222). The instructor is **Joe Morlan**, co-author of *Birds of Northern California* and compiler of our weekly recorded "Northern California Rare Bird Alert".

Ornithology I is an introduction to avian biology. It stresses concepts in modern ornithology, including behavior, population ecology and evolution, illustrated primarily by common Bay Area birds. It meets Tuesdays starting Jan. 13 from 7-9:30 p.m., in room 309, Arts Bldg.

Ornithology II is an in-depth systematic treatment of identification and status of landbirds including thrashers, pipits, vireos, warblers and sparrows. It meets Wednesdays starting Jan. 14 from 7-9:30 p.m., in room 268, Arts Bldg.

Ornithology III will cover waterbirds including diving ducks, rails, shorebirds and gulls. It meets Thursdays starting Jan. 15 from 7-9:30 p.m., in room 307, Arts Bldg.

These classes are sponsored by GGAS as a public service and all evening classes are free of charge. Optional field trips may be arranged on weekends for \$40 for nine half-day trips. Please bring binoculars and field guides to class if you have them. For more information call the college at 561-1900.



MONO BENEFITS ELEPHANT SEAL TIME AGAIN

Mono Lake Committee again is sponsoring bus tours to see the elephant seals on their breeding grounds at Ano Nuevo State Reserve, 26 miles south of Half Moon Bay. The naturalist-guided tour of this unique spot in nature consists of a 2½-hour, 3-mile hike over sand dunes to observe the males, females and pups which are all present at this time.

The bus will leave N. Berkeley BART station at 9 a.m. and return at 5 p.m. There will be an early lunch stop at a beach enroute. Bring your lunch; cold beverages will be provided. Trips go rain or shine.

The cost is \$19/person prior to Jan. 15 and \$21 after that. Last year all space was taken before the early date!

For reservations, send a check payable to Mono Lake Committee, c/o M. Bennett, 2719 Marin Ave., Berkeley, 94708, with a self-addressed, stamped envelope and your telephone number. No refunds. If you have questions, please call 526-1260.

ALASKA

Mono Lake Committee's super trip to Alaska is scheduled for June 21-July 4, with an optional extension to Glacier Bay National Park. This is prime time for visiting "The Great Land" as the days are longest, temperatures mildest, and precipitation lowest. Our odyssey includes the sights and sounds of the Kenai Peninsula, Prince William Sound, Richardson and Glenn Highways, and five days at *Camp Denali*. The adventure may be extended to two nights at Glacier Bay National Park and two nights at Juneau.

The trip fee is \$2252, if the reservation deposit of \$350 is received before Feb. 1. Included in this fee is a \$300 tax-deductible donation to Mono Lake

Fund. Airfare and the Glacier Bay extension are additional. For complete information, send a self-addressed, stamped legal-size envelope to ALASKA '87, c/o M. Bennett, 2719 Marin Ave., Berkeley, 94708.

GGAS EXTENDED TRIPS COSTA RICA STILL AVAILABLE

There are a few places still available on our exciting trip to Costa Rica on March 14 through March 29. Twelve lucky GGAS members and friends will have the unusual opportunity to visit Corcovado National Park, spend a morning with Dr. Alexander Skutch at his farm, as well as all the standard birding spots in this tropical paradise. Please call the GGAS office for information, 843-2222. Don't delay!

KENYA SAFARI HIGHLIGHTS

The 1986 Kenya GGAS Tour was an unqualified success and filled with memorable events. We had close views of a pair of cheetas in Samburu along with a charging elephant. In the Kakamega Forest we watched Black and White Colobus Monkeys hurtle through space as they leaped from tree to tree. The Snow-capped peaks for Mt. Kenya and Mt. Kilimanjaro loomed over herds of antelope, buffalo, giraffe and zebra. Each new area brought new sights of volcanic lava flows or dry thornbush or lush farmland or freshwater lakes. Our last two days were spent snorkeling in the warm, clear waters of the Indian Ocean among schools of rainbow colored fish. Everywhere we went there were new birds as we totaled 532 species over the 21-day tour.

For me, the best of the best was a Sunday evening game drive in the Masai Mara. The Mara is what I had envisioned "Africa" to be. There are vast grassy plains stretching off to the

horizon. The sky here seems to be at its most dramatic, filled with enormous billowy clouds. This is the northern edge of the Serengeti Plain, home to large herds of all the wild animals of Kenya, as well as all the big cats. It is also home to the Masai people, tall, slender, proud people still living in the ways of their ancestors. Our game drive through this wild land will long be remembered by everyone on the tour.

The game drive started slowly in the late afternoon as we came upon still more sleeping lions. We worried that no one back home would believe we had seen any wild animals since all our photos would be of sleeping lions. Our driver, Matthew, was trying to find the rhinos we had missed during the morning drive. Several other groups had seen them but we thought we had run out of good fortune which had been with us throughout the tour. I didn't think it was really good fortune but the skill of Matthew and Terry Stevenson, our fantastic leader, who found animals and birds everywhere and long before anyone else could spot them.

Finally, we closed in on a spot where rhinos had just been seen. As we did so we came upon a lioness stalking some hartebeest. This was the first alert lion we had seen but she was too far from the animals to make a charge. I marvelled at how peacefully the animals seemed to be grazing with a full grown lioness only 75 yards away. Since the lioness was just sitting in the grass watching the hartebeest we drifted off to check again for the rhinos. Just as we were about to give up a huge female and her "baby" came munching slowly through the bush. The female had two enormous horns on her snout—each about two feet long!

As we watched mother and child casually eat through the bush the sun set

and the light gradually faded. A male rhino soon joined the pair and we felt extremely lucky to have found these fascinating creatures who are threatened with extinction. Dusk had really set in when I noticed out of the corner of my eye a small herd of wildebeest suddenly loping downhill to our left. I turned to watch them run and just as I did the lioness came into view, stalking the wildebeest. The herd picked up speed as she appeared but then slowed and even stopped after going behind some thick bush. She continued stalking them, creeping closer while using the bush as a cover.

The wildebeest moved slowly away as the lioness jogged behind the bush, pacing them. Only her legs moved, her body keeping low in the grass. Her total concentration was focused on her prey. As they started to run she took off after them, at first slowly as her powerful legs built up to speed. The lioness reached top speed quickly, her legs churning as she fixed on the animal she had selected. The wildebeest were in full flight, staying together while trying to escape. Just as the lioness was about to reach the herd they swung behind some thick bush and disappeared briefly, then ran out the other side. The lion was no longer in sight. Matthew quickly swung the van around and headed down the bush, about 100 yards away. As we rounded the corner we came within 15 feet of the lion, crouched at the edge of the bush with her teeth clamped firmly around the neck of a young wildebeest. It was chilling to watch the struggling animal die and then to see the matter-of-fact way the lion prepared to eat her kill. However, the hunt—the stalking and chasing—was one of the most thrilling things I have ever seen.

When you add to the wildlife of

Kenya the friendly, smiling people, the comfortable accommodations, the delicious food and the great company of Terry Stevenson, our leader, one can understand why we had such a successful trip. Terry showed us more birds, almost all lifers for everyone, than we could hope to see on any trip. In addition, he kept us entertained the entire trip with his marvelous sense of humor. Since we heard a great deal about his preparations for the Big Day contest we were all very happy when we learned that just after our tour Terry became the World Big Day Champion, sighting 342 species in 24 hours.

Golden Gate Audubon will offer another Kenya Tour in 1987. This trip will be a two-week tour and dates and cost will be announced in the near future. Terry Stevenson will again be the leader. For further information call me.

—CHRIS CARPENTER
Extended Trips Coordinator

SHEARWATER TOURS

For ten years Debra Love Shearwater has been providing an array of pelagic trips and serving the birding community well. While it is not possible for *The GULL* to print the entire offering, Jan. 24 there is a trip to Monterey Seavalle, another on Feb. 15, and on Feb. 22 there is a trip to Cordell Bank. If you would like to be on her mailing list, write Box 1445, Soquel, CA 95073, or call her at (408) 688-1990.

THE SEA LEVEL

Recently the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission reported in its newsletter Bay Tidings the conclusion of its hydrological consultant. Dr. Philip Williams pointed out that major climatic changes will accelerate the current rate of rise in the sea level from a half a foot per century to between two and eight feet over the

next hundred years. Most scientists agree and because of this startling statistic the US Environmental Protection Agency suggests that planners use a middle range estimate of four feet for the expected rise in the level of the San Francisco Bay in the next century.

The major conclusions of Dr. Williams' study are: 1) this acceleration is caused by the warming of the global climate due to accumulation in the atmosphere of gasses such as carbon dioxide, methane and chlorofluorocarbons, in turn caused by fossil fuel burning and deforestation of the world's tropical rain forests; 2) the rise in sea level would double the size of the Bay/Delta system because areas such as the salt ponds and duck clubs in the Suisun Marsh and agricultural areas along San Pablo Bay and in the Delta islands would eventually be inundated because it will be only economically feasible to maintain levees surrounding urban development; 3) if the Bay and Delta are so enlarged, tidal circulation would change, salinity would increase in Suisun Bay and the Delta, sedimentation rates may decrease, wave action would increase, flooding of adjacent low-lying areas would increase, storm water drainage would be impeded, toxic waste and garbage dumps may be exposed, navigation would improve, groundwater would be contaminated, and wetland habitats around the Bay would be reduced; and 4) the flooding of the Delta islands and consequent increase in salinity would dramatically affect the water supplies for agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley and urban use in eastern Contra Costa Co. and southern California.

Dr. Williams recommended that government agencies and academic institutions begin a coordinated planning effort for flood control, environmental resource protection, and protection of the Suisun Marsh and the Delta.

HUMMINGBIRDS

The Lawrence Hall of Science will be presenting a slide illustrated lecture by the photographer, Robert Tyrrell and the author, Esther Tyrrell, who are responsible for the recently published *Hummingbirds*. The only Bay Area appearances of the couple will be Saturday, Feb. 7 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 8 at 2 p.m. The lectures are co-sponsored by Golden Gate, Marin and Mt. Diablo Audubon Societies.

In addition to their lectures, an exhibit of Mr. Tyrrell's photographs will be mounted at the LHS. His work has been published in *National Geographic*, *Natural History*, and *National Wildlife*. Look for more particulars in *The GULL* for February.

EDUCATION, ANYONE?

Over the past few years our chapter has had only interim leadership in the area of education. Considering the importance of outreach and education in the furthering of appreciation of nature and concern for the environment in our youth this neglect is unforgivable. As with most things, all we lack are volunteers willing to lead and to participate.

A telephone call to Arthur Feinstein, chapter president, or Barbara Rivenes, office manager, will give you all the information you would need to make up your mind whether you could help. Our goal is to build a panel of speakers who would go to classrooms in local schools or to garden clubs and civic organizations to give slide illustrated talks. But things of this sort happen only when participating members are willing to carry the message and share their enthusiasm. You?

PCL FOURTH ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE SYMPOSIUM

The Planning and Conservation League is holding its annual Environmental Legislative Symposium Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, 1987 at Cal State U, Sacramento. The purpose is to inform activists from throughout California of major environmental issues to be considered by the legislature in 1987, and to develop priorities and strategies for action. Speakers will include Assemblymen Richard Katz and Burt Margolin and the Speaker of the Assembly, Willie Brown.

Saturday will be devoted to workshops on a variety of issues; Sunday will include debates on such issues as continued use of nuclear power (Rancho Seco) and the through delta facility.

People who have attended previous Symposia have reported them to have been very worthwhile. If interested, call the GGAS office or PCL at (916) 444-8726, or write them at 909 12th St., Sacramento, CA 95814.



NEWS FROM THE RANCH

Audubon Canyon Ranch
Shoreline Hwy., Stinson Beach, Ca.
(415) 383-1644
Wildlife Sanctuaries & Centers for Nature
Education under joint sponsorship of Golden Gate,
Madrone, Marin and Sequoia Audubon Societies
Rick Baird, Chairman

A Weekend Interpreters program will begin this spring at the Bolinas Preserve. As ranch guides, participants will be posted at the heronry overlook and at the pond to help visitors understand the biology of each habitat. Applicants should be enthusiastic, flexible, willing to learn and agreeable to working eight weekend days during the spring over a two year period. Ray Peterson and Anne Monk will hold day long training classes for those interested on Saturdays in March. There will be a small fee for materials. Interested volunteers should call Anne or Ray at 868-0611.

ACR has a new part-time business manager, Erick Pinkham, working at the headquarters, Picher Canyon. His position has been funded for a first year

by a Buck Fund grant. This grant of \$82,400 will also provide for environmental, educational, planning and development programs.

There are three February events for your calendar:

Celebrate Darwin's Birthday with a hike on Saturday, February 7 at the Bolinas Preserve. Join Anne Monk for a day of hunting fossils, dodging waves and learning about origins and evolution as you hike the coast.

Single-Parent Family Weekend Feb. 14 and 15 at Volunteer Canyon. Anne Monk and Ray Peterson will lead a search for early newts, salamanders, ducks and early blooming wildflowers. Games, story telling and art projects round out the good times.

Photo Set-up Feb. 21 and 22 at the Bolinas Preserve. Turning molehills into mountains or how to get great close-up photos. Ray and Anne will teach you three easy and sure ways to do it. Extension semester Unit may be earned for this class.

Reservations at the ranch: 383-1644.

GIFTS and BEQUESTS

FOR GGAS LEGAL ACTION FUND

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Susan Peters
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The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 1550 Shattuck Ave., #204, Berkeley, CA 94709. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

— SECOND CLASS MATTER



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Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$8 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917,
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.